

# **THE ABC'S OF BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

**A**lways consider the child's feelings. Be courteous and expect courtesy. Avoid embarrassing a child.

**B**e alert and observant. Develop an ability to always see or know what is going on in your group. Convey your alertness and attentiveness to the children. This is perhaps the most effective way to prevent problems *before* they occur.

**C**hoose your words carefully when problems do arise.

**D**iscipline yourself. In other words, control your temper. Some children enjoy seeing your reactions to their behavior. In addition, you may be inadvertently teaching children that angry outbursts are acceptable.

**E**xcessive flattery as a technique to motivate or control is ineffective. Children regard this technique as phony "gushiness." It deteriorates the esteem the students hold for you as an adult. Acceptance of each child must be sincere and unconditional.

**F**irmness and fairness should abide.

**G**ood humor goes a long way. Children who see you happy are more likely to be happy themselves. Don't be afraid to laugh at yourself.

**H**andle problems yourself as much as possible. Do not threaten to send a child to the supervisor. In fact, be very careful about threatening anything. Threats can cause a power struggle which generally escalates into a no-win situation.

**I**gnore those behaviors that are just to get attention.

**J**oin the children at the back of the line. That way you can see all of them as they go down the hall.

**K**eepest this simple idea in mind...We are not dealing with children who *are* problems, but rather children who *may have* problems.

**L**ead and train children at the beginning of the year.

**M**ake positive statements as much as possible. Warm responses and wholesome child demeanor are largely a result of the degree of positivism the teacher shows the children.

**N**ever underestimate the power of your appearance. Staff members should dress appropriately. Wear comfortable clothing and shoes, but exercise good taste. Remember the manner in which you dress sets the climate for your group.

**O**ptions are important to children. Vary activities to reduce boredom and enhance their interest.

**P**roximity control is an effective preventative approach. Some misbehavior can be stopped by moving close to the child who is causing the problem.

**Q**uiet activities can be just as much fun as noisy ones.

**R**outine rules and procedures such as room use, returning and leaving the room, distributing materials, and cleanup should be presented beforehand. Smoother transitions occur when time is invested in teaching children such procedures early in the program.

**S**how the children you are up for the challenge. A well-organized plan is the most essential key to good behavior. There is no substitute for being well prepared. Remember: Staff who fail to plan, plan to fail.

**T**ry to predict what would confuse or distract children.

**U**se natural consequences as appropriate. Try to devise a consequence that is a natural outgrowth of the behavior. For example—have a child sweep the room if he or she has been throwing sand from the sand and water table.

**V**alue each child and time spent with every child. Make the most of it. Understand that while children are with you, your role becomes both teacher *and* substitute parent.

**W**atch the amount of attention you give to individual children. Whether it is for a problem or not, children “tune in” to how much time you spend with others. Refrain from favoritism. Children can sense this immediately.

**X**-pect to have fun. Meeting your own expectations always makes you feel good about yourself and the program.

**Y**elling is not effective with children. Teachers who use this approach may have quiet, controlled children one moment, and angry, hostile ones the next.

**Z**oom in and handle problems quickly. The sooner the problem is handled, the less disruptive it will become. When you see disruptive behavior let the child know immediately. Otherwise, by “letting it slide” you are in effect, telling the child that the behavior is acceptable.